

Amendments to the Claims:

1-58. (previously canceled)

59. (currently amended) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 58 encoding a polypeptide having at least 85% ~~nucleic acid~~ sequence identity to:

(a) ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of~~ SEQ ID NO:523 shown in Figure 222 (SEQ ID NO:523);

(b) ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of~~ SEQ ID NO:523 shown in Figure 222 (SEQ ID NO:523), lacking its associated signal peptide;

(c) the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:522 shown in Figure 221 (SEQ ID NO:522);

(d) the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:522 shown in Figure 221 (SEQ ID NO:522); or

(e) the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 209487,

wherein the nucleic acid encodes a polypeptide that is a mitogen for inner ear supporting cells.

60. (currently amended) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 58 encoding a polypeptide having at least 90% ~~nucleic acid~~ sequence identity to:

(a) ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of~~ SEQ ID NO:523 shown in Figure 222 (SEQ ID NO:523);

(b) ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of~~ SEQ ID NO:523 shown in Figure 222 (SEQ ID NO:523), lacking its associated signal peptide;

(c) the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:522 shown in Figure 221 (SEQ ID NO:522);

(d) the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:522 shown in Figure 221 (SEQ ID NO:522); or

(e) the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 209487,

wherein the nucleic acid encodes a polypeptide that is a mitogen for inner ear supporting cells.

61. (currently amended) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 58 encoding a polypeptide having at least 95% ~~nucleic acid~~ sequence identity to:

(a) ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of~~ SEQ ID NO:523 ~~shown in Figure 222 (SEQ ID NO:523);~~

(b) ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of~~ SEQ ID NO:523 ~~shown in Figure 222 (SEQ ID NO:523),~~ lacking its associated signal peptide;

(c) the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:522 ~~shown in Figure 221 (SEQ ID NO:522);~~

(d) the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:522 ~~shown in Figure 221 (SEQ ID NO:522);~~ or

(e) the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 209487,

wherein the nucleic acid encodes a polypeptide that is a mitogen for inner ear supporting cells.

62. (currently amended) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 58 encoding a polypeptide having at least 99% ~~nucleic acid~~ sequence identity to:

(a) ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of~~ SEQ ID NO:523 ~~shown in Figure 222 (SEQ ID NO:523);~~

(b) ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of~~ SEQ ID NO:523 ~~shown in Figure 222 (SEQ ID NO:523),~~ lacking its associated signal peptide;

(c) the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:522 ~~shown in Figure 221 (SEQ ID NO:522);~~

(d) the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:522 ~~shown in Figure 221 (SEQ ID NO:522);~~ or

(e) the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 209487,

wherein the nucleic acid encodes a polypeptide that is a mitogen for inner ear supporting cells.

63. (currently amended) An isolated nucleic acid comprising:

(a) ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the~~ amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:523 shown in Figure 222 (SEQ ID NO:523);

(b) ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the~~ amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:523 shown in Figure 222 (SEQ ID NO:523), lacking its associated signal peptide;

(d) the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:522 shown in Figure 221 (SEQ ID NO:522); or

(e) the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 209487.

64. (currently amended) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 63 comprising ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the~~ amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:523 shown in Figure 222 (SEQ ID NO:523).

65. (currently amended) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 63 comprising ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the~~ amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:523 shown in Figure 222 (SEQ ID NO:523), lacking its associated signal peptide.

66. (canceled)

67. (canceled)

68. (currently amended) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 63 comprising the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:522 shown in Figure 221 (SEQ ID NO:522).

69. (currently amended) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 63 comprising the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:522 shown in Figure 221 (SEQ ID NO:522).

70. (previously presented) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 63 comprising the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 209487.

71. (cancel)

72. (cancel)

73. (cancel)

74. (currently amended) A vector comprising the nucleic acid of Claim [[58]] 59, 78 or 82.

75. (previously presented) The vector of Claim 74, wherein said nucleic acid is operably linked to control sequences recognized by a host cell transformed with the vector.

76. (currently amended) An isolated host cell comprising the vector of Claim 74.

77. (previously presented) The host cell of Claim 76, wherein said cell is a CHO cell, an *E. coli* or a yeast cell.

78. (new) An isolated nucleic acid encoding a polypeptide having at least 85% sequence identity to:

- (a) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:523;
- (b) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:523, lacking its associated signal peptide;
- (c) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:522; or
- (d) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 209487, wherein the encoded polypeptide induces chondrocyte re-differentiation.

79. (new) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 78 encoding a polypeptide having at least 90% sequence identity to:

- (a) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:523;

- (b) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:523, lacking its associated signal peptide;
 - (c) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:522; or
 - (d) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 209487,
- wherein the encoded polypeptide induces chondrocyte re-differentiation.

80. (new) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 78 encoding a polypeptide having at least 95% sequence identity to:

- (a) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:523;
 - (b) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:523, lacking its associated signal peptide;
 - (c) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:522; or
 - (d) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 209487,
- wherein the encoded polypeptide induces chondrocyte re-differentiation.

81. (new) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 78 encoding a polypeptide having at least 99% sequence identity to:

- (a) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:523;
 - (b) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:523, lacking its associated signal peptide;
 - (c) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:522; or
 - (d) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 209487,
- wherein the encoded polypeptide induces chondrocyte re-differentiation.

82. (new) An isolated nucleic acid encoding a polypeptide having at least 85% sequence identity to:

- (a) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:523;
- (b) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:523, lacking its associated signal peptide;
- (c) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:522; or

(d) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 209487,

wherein the encoded polypeptide stimulates the uptake of glucose or FFA (free fatty acid) by adipocyte cells.

83. (new) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 82 encoding a polypeptide having at least 90% sequence identity to:

- (a) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:523;
- (b) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:523, lacking its associated signal peptide;
- (c) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:522; or

(d) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 209487,

wherein the encoded polypeptide stimulates the uptake of glucose or FFA (free fatty acid) by adipocyte cells.

84. (new) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 82 encoding a polypeptide having at least 95% sequence identity to:

- (a) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:523;
- (b) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:523, lacking its associated signal peptide;
- (c) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:522; or

(d) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 209487,

wherein the encoded polypeptide stimulates the uptake of glucose or FFA (free fatty acid) by adipocyte cells.

85. (new) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 82 encoding a polypeptide having at least 99% sequence identity to:

(a) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:523;

(b) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:523, lacking its associated signal peptide;

(c) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:522; or

(d) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide encoded by the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 209487,

wherein the encoded polypeptide stimulates the uptake of glucose or FFA (free fatty acid) by adipocyte cells.